

really admire. Because it's gutsy. It's against conventional wisdom. And it's stupid. But I have a sneaking feeling it might just work and prove everyone (me included) wrong. Because these girls are good. 'ay, I heard them on Anish Trivedi's programme on FM and they actually sound like someone whose CD I might want to buy. If I have one small criticism, though, it is this: Don't subject them to fifteen different music directors. (Especially some that they don't seem too comfortable with!) I know that makes commercial sense. But one music director makes musical sense. It'll help give the girls a sound of their own. And if you're playing for long term then play for keeps!

Postscript: A few months ago MTV had my vote for "Music Channel of Choice". But now I think Channel V is back. I think Amar Deb and his team have done a great job of re-capturing for V the image high ground. The numbers I am sure will follow. And if they don't, hey! it's okay. At least they'll own trying something different. After all, if it's TRPs you want you can always create a *saas-bahu* pop band — and so on and so forth and see ya next time!

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Novel Memoirs

MOHAMMED WAJHUDDIN

WHEN Pandit Kidar Sharma penned the haunting number *Hamari yaad ayegi*, for his film by the same name, he had no premonition of time's cruelty. Amidst Bollywood *banias* busy undermining the popular taste, Sharma's work (lyrics and films) excels for its sheer simplicity and healthy romanticism. And if you can't lay your hands on an authentic book on this delightful poet-writer-director, grab a copy of his autobiography *The One and Lonely Kidar Sharma*, edited by his elder son Dr Vikram Sharma for Shrishti Publishers and Distributors.

The book was almost complete when Sharma passed away in April 1999. "My only regret is that the book could not see the light of the day in my father's lifetime. He had seen its final draft and even okayed it with some suggestions. But it got delayed because of some personal problems," says Vikram.

The late Kidar Sharma's autobiography is an anecdotal commentary of the era this poet-writer-filmmaker lived in

Written in simple language, and punctuated with literary references, it has a foreword by filmmaker Saeed Mirza. Unlike most autobiographies which talk little beyond "I, me, myself", Sharma's book is a commentary on the era he lived in. Beginning with his growing up days in Sialkot, the book portrays his journey to Kolkata, his meeting with Devki Bose and Kundanlal Saigal at Naya Theatre and his final stop: Bombay. "He wasn't successful commercially, but he left a mark in many a field," says



Vikram.

But when you consider Sharma's directorial ventures (*Chitralekha*, *Neel Kamal*, *Suhag Raat*, *Jogan*, *Shokhiyaan*, *Bawre Nain* and *Hamari Yaad Ayegi*) you realise few could match his talent. If Saigal charmed the connoisseurs with his haunting songs, credit must go to the man behind the scene — poet Kidar Sharma. Apart from being an accomplished lyricist and filmmaker, Sharma was a great talent hunter. He gave breaks to Raj

Kapoor, Madhubala, Bharat Bhushan, Gita Bali, Tanuja and Mala Sinha. He also discovered music directors like Khan Sahib Jhande Khan, Buloo C Rani and Jamal Saini. As a tribute to the great lyricist, HMV Sare Gama has come out with a cassette of his hit songs under the same title.

The book carries several anecdotes about Sharma and his contemporaries. After he came to the city, Sharma went to the Gateway of India. Taken by the sea (he had seen it for the first time in his life), the poet couldn't stop asking: *Aur chaad ne sagar ke seene mein dhadkan paida kardi kyon?* Once Sharma felt under the weather. When a doctor told him his days were numbered, he found solace in Allama Iqbal's timeless couplet: *Baag-e-Bahisht se mujhe rafte safar diya tha kyon/Kaare jahan daraaz hai ab mera intezaar kar* (God, why did you throw me out of paradise/Now wait for me, since I have to finish many a worldly work). That's the benefit the poet in him enjoyed. Hoping against hope, he lived to narrate an interesting tale. A tale now captured between covers.